

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of detecting stopwords in a query comprising:
 - identifying a potential stopword in the query based on a comparison to a list of stopwords;
 - generating a plurality of sets of context data based on the query and the potential stopword;
 - comparing the sets of context data; and
 - classifying the potential stopword either as an actual stopword or as being material to the query based on the comparing.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - rewriting the query to remove the actual stopword from the query.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the potential stopword includes a plurality of stopwords and each of the plurality of sets of context data corresponds to a combination of the potential stopwords.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein comparing the sets of context data includes comparing the sets of context data to one another to determine whether various ones of the plurality of sets of context data are substantially similar.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein generating the plurality of sets of context data includes:

generating a first set of context data from the query; and
generating a second set of context data from a version of the query in which the potential stopword is removed.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein generating the plurality of sets of context data includes:

deriving a plurality of second queries from the query and the potential stopword;
and
querying a database using the plurality of second queries.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein querying the database includes issuing the plurality of second queries to a search engine, and wherein the potential stopword includes a plurality of potential stopwords and the plurality of second queries are derived from combinations of the potential stopwords plus terms in the query that are not potential stopwords.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein generating the plurality of sets of context data includes:

deriving a plurality of second queries from the query and the potential stopword;
and

locating categories relevant to the second queries using a category generator.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the potential stopword includes a plurality of potential stopwords and plurality of second queries are derived from combinations of the potential stopwords plus terms in the query that are not potential stopwords.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the potential stopword includes a stop-phrase.

11. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

identifying potential stopwords in a query;
generating context data based on the query and the potential stopwords; [[and]]
designating, as actual stopwords, those of the potential stopwords that do not
meaningfully contribute to the generation of the context data; and
rewriting the query to remove one or more of the potential actual stopwords that
do not substantially affect the generation of the context data from the query.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein generating the context data includes:
retrieving a plurality of sets of context data in which each said set corresponds to
a different combination of the potential stopwords.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising wherein the
designating the actual stopwords includes:
comparing the plurality of sets of context data to one another to determine
whether various ones of the plurality of sets of context data are substantially similar,
wherein rewriting the query to remove the one or more of the potential actual
stopwords that do not substantially affect the generation of the context data is based on
the comparison of the plurality of sets of context data.
14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein generating the context data includes:
generating a first set of context data as context data derived from the query; and
generating a second set of context data as context data derived from a version of
the query in which one or more potential stopwords are removed.
15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein generating the context data includes:
deriving a plurality of second queries from the query and the potential stopwords;
and
querying a database using the plurality of second queries.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of second queries are derived from combinations of the potential stopwords plus terms in the query that are not potential stopwords.

17. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein generating the context data includes: deriving a plurality of second queries from the query and the potential stopwords; and

issuing the plurality of second queries to a category generator to locate categories relevant to the second queries.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the plurality of second queries are derived from combinations of the potential stopwords plus terms in the query that are not potential stopwords.

19. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein identifying the potential stopwords includes:

matching terms in the query to a pre-defined list of stopwords.

20. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the potential stopwords include potential stopwords and stop-phrases.

21. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a parser component configured to receive a search query and identify potential stopwords in the search query;

a context generation component to generate context data based on the search query and the potential stopwords; and

a comparator component to compare the context data to determine those of the potential stopwords that effected generation of [[the]] context data that is not substantially similar to context data unassociated with those potential stopwords.

22. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 21, wherein, when the comparator determines that one or more of the potential stopwords do not substantially effect generation of [[the]] context data that is not substantially similar to context data unassociated with the one or more potential stopwords, the search query is rewritten to a form that does not include the one or more of the potential stopwords that do not substantially affect generation of the context data.

23. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the context generation component includes a search engine.

24. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the comparator component compares sets of documents returned from the search engine to determine those of the potential stopwords that affect effect generation of [[the]] context data that is not substantially similar to context data unassociated with those potential stopwords.

25. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the context generation component includes a category generator configured to locate category lists relevant to a search query.

26. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 25, wherein the comparator component compares category lists to one another to determine those of the potential stopwords that affect effect generation of [[the]] context data that is not substantially similar to context data unassociated with those potential stopwords.

27. (Currently Amended) A device comprising:
means for identifying potential stopwords in a query, wherein the potential stopwords include at least one actual stopword;
means for generating context data based on the query and the potential stopwords;
[[and]]
means for detecting the at least one actual stopword based on whether the one or more of the potential stopwords meaningfully contributes to the generation of the context data; and
means for rewriting the query to remove those of the potential stopwords that do not substantially effect generation of the context data the at least one actual stopword.

28. (Original) The device of claim 27, further comprising:

means for searching a document index to locate a set of documents and return the set of documents to the means for generating context data.

29. (Original) The device of claim 27, further comprising:
means for locating a list of categories relevant to an input category query and returning the list of categories to the means for generating context data.

30. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium containing instructions for causing a processor to perform a method, the computer-readable storage medium comprising:

instructions for identifying potential stopwords in a query;
instructions for retrieving context data based on the query and the potential stopwords; [[and]]
instructions for classifying those of the potential stopwords that do not meaningfully contribute to the retrieving of the context data as actual stopwords and others of the potential stopwords that meaningfully contribute to the retrieving of the context data as being material to the query; and
instructions for rewriting the query to remove those of the potential actual stopwords that do not substantially effect retrieving of the context data.

31. (Currently Amended) A document retrieval system comprising:
a search engine configured to:

receive a user search query,

receive rewritten versions of the search query that exclude stopwords not material to an intended result of the search query, and

perform a search of a document index based on the rewritten versions of the search query; and

a stopword detection component to rewrite the search query, the stopword detection component including:

a parser component configured to receive the user search query and identify potential stopwords in the search query;

a context generation component to generate context data based on the search query and the potential stopwords; and

a comparator component to compare the context data to determine those of the potential stopwords that affect meaningfully contribute to the context data and classify those potential stopwords as non-stopwords to be included in at least one of the rewritten versions of the search query.